



STATE OF IOWA

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DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
CHARLES J. KROGMEIER, DIRECTOR

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Iowa Child Support Unit Earns National Award

DES MOINES, Iowa—Iowa's Child Support Recovery Unit has received the 2009 Outstanding Program of the Year award from the National Child Support Enforcement Association.

"Our collection efforts in behalf of children have been cutting edge for several years, and I'm proud that we had record collections last fiscal year despite a sour economy," said Department of Human Services Director Charles Krogmeier. The DHS administers the collection unit.

Iowa's CSRU routinely ranks among the leading agencies of its kind. The 70 percent rate of on-time payments from non-custodial parents and the cost-effectiveness ratio—every \$1 generates \$5.38 in collections—are well above national averages.

"One of the main things we look at is performance on federal measures," said Howard Baldwin, president of the NCSEA. "There are very clear cut outcome measures, and you guys improved on all of them over the last three years. You knocked the top off. Congratulations," he said.

A 2003 innovation by the CSRU—requiring nearly all benefits to be paid electronically—is now a national standard. The change saved millions of dollars in postage alone. It ended the problem of check-cashing fees and theft, and reduced turnaround time for payments.

The CSRU was also the first to establish joint offices with neighboring states to speed up collections, and it remains the only state to establish a one-stop operation for employers to establish income withholding for employees. A recent innovation allows employers to send withholdings electronically.

The unit collected a record \$351 million last fiscal year, a 2 percent increase. The average payment to custodial parents is about \$200 a month.

Krogmeier said the CSRU is aggressive in establishing paternity and court orders for child support payments, but he said another key element is that Iowa encourages non-custodial parents to play an active role in their children's lives.

He said that non-custodial parents who are involved with their children are much more likely to comply with court-ordered support payments than parents who feel estranged from their children.

CSRU officials accepted the award in ceremonies in Little Rock, Ark., earlier this month.

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